

MINUTE
of
CABINET
(POLICE AND FIRE)

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock, on 25 February 2016.

Present:

Councillor Mary Montague (Chair)
Councillor Jim Fletcher (Vice Chair)

Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Stewart Miller

Councillor Montague in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Jim Sneddon, Head of Democratic and Partnership Services; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Chief Superintendent Andy Bates and Chief Inspector Angela Carty, Police Scotland; and Group Managers, Richard Duncan and Stephen Wright, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apologies:

Councillors Tony Buchanan; Danny Devlin; Barbara Grant; Elaine Green; and Ian McAlpine.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1922. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF FINANCIAL YEAR 2015/16

1923. The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland providing details of the performance of the police in East Renfrewshire over the third quarter of 2015/16. A statistical report giving a breakdown of various categories of crimes and offences committed during the reported period was appended to the report.

Whilst noting that since the date of the last meeting, Mr Philip Gormley QPM had been appointed as the new Chief Constable of Police Scotland, Chief Superintendent Bates also advised that he would be retiring from the force on 31 March 2016 and that the process of appointing his successor was ongoing. Concluding his remarks, he thanked the Council's

elected Members and officers for all the support he had received during his time as Divisional Commander of the Greater Glasgow Division. At this stage, he invited Chief Inspector Carty to provide further details on the information contained in the performance report for the third quarter of 2015/16.

Chief Inspector Carty reported on the performance of the police over the reported period highlighting that it was measured against the four priorities in the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2014-2017. These were noted as Tackling Violence, Disorder and Antisocial Behaviour; Protecting People; Increasing Public Confidence and Local Engagement; and Tackling Serious Crime and Responding to Major Events.

Whilst noting that overall crimes of violence had remained the same at 37 when compared to the corresponding period the previous year, Chief Inspector Carty stated that whilst there were 9 fewer victims of serious assault there were 9 more victims of the crime of robbery. She highlighted that as a result of the concern about the level of robberies, during December 2015 additional officers were deployed as part of the 'Winter Initiative' a high visibility patrol plan to prevent robberies taking place both on the street and at premises where traditionally large sums of money were kept at that time of year. She reported that the robbery detection rate was 84.6%, a significant improvement on the corresponding period the previous year although there had been a slight fall in the detection rate for serious assaults.

Chief Inspector Carty also reported that the focus on common assaults had continued and that there had been 23 fewer assaults compared to the corresponding period the previous year representing a 7.9% reduction. She also reported that crimes and offences relating to domestic abuse incidents had seen a significant reduction in the number of incidents from 284 in 2014/15 to 218 in 2015/16. Furthermore, she reported on the details of the National Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland. It was also noted that there had been an increase in the number of sexual crimes recorded which stood at 67 as compared to the numbers recorded in the corresponding period the previous year which was noted as 48. It was explained that this increase included a number of historic crimes and demonstrated an improved confidence by individuals in reporting this type of crime. The detection rate over the reported period was noted as 80.6%. Furthermore, the number of housebreakings (including attempted break-ins) had decreased by 20% from 196 in the same period the previous year to 155 over the third quarter of 2015/16 although the detection rate had also decreased by 2.8% to 20.7%.

Concluding her remarks, Chief Inspector Carty stated that a public consultation validation exercise had been carried out in September 2015 to ensure that the police were focussing on the issues that local communities in East Renfrewshire considered to be a priority and that partnership working continued through meetings of the Greater Results in Partnership (GRIP).

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Chief Superintendent Bates and Chief Inspector Carty provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire.

During the discussion Chief Inspector Carty explained that incidents of violence on trains would be dealt with by British Transport Police and recorded in their statistics. She also explained that the 7 immigration offences referred to in the report were dealt with by the Border Agency and further information on these offences could be obtained for Members. Other matters that were discussed included amongst other things, the reasons for the reduction in the number of housebreakings and associated improvement in the detection rate for this type of offence, historic sexual crimes, partnership working in tackling Domestic Abuse, and the ways in which Police Scotland publicised methods of crime prevention within East Renfrewshire.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2015/16

1924. The Cabinet considered a report by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), providing details of the performance of the SFRS in East Renfrewshire during the third quarter of 2015/16. An analysis of the incidents in each of the Council's six wards during the reported period was appended to the report.

Group Manager Wright reported that there had been one fire fatality within East Renfrewshire during the reported period which occurred on 23 October 2015 in the Newton Mearns North area and involved a female within an outbuilding next to her house. Furthermore, there had been 2 fire casualties during the reported period although both were treated as a precautionary measure only. Accidental dwelling fires had slightly increased from 13 to 15 compared to the corresponding period the previous year. Deliberate fires had also increased from 24 to 33 compared to the previous year although there had been a decrease in the numbers reported in Quarter 2, particularly a notable reduction in secondary fires.

Whilst noting that there had been a total of 9 fires in non-domestic properties which included commercial, industrial and local authority buildings representing a slight increase from the last reported period, Group Manager Wright reported that there was ongoing positive engagement with these types of premises with the Fire Safety Enforcement Team. The number of special services had increased from 23 to 35 in comparison to the same quarter last year and this was due to the slight increase in the number of Road Traffic Collisions and also attending other special services to assist other emergency service agencies. Furthermore, he highlighted that the number of false alarms had increased from 120 to 131 compared to the previous year, although there had been a decrease from Quarter 2 and this was mainly due to a pro-active targeted approach to reducing unwanted alarms due to equipment failure. It was noted that this would remain a key area of improvement for SFRS in the coming months.

A summary of the range of activities undertaken by SFRS during the reported period in terms of education activities and interventions were outlined in the report. These included Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV), Telecare installations, Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals, Partnership Engagement and the continuing work of the SFRS Community Action Team in association with the Council's Youth Services. This involved delivering Firereach courses to young people at risk of offending. It was noted that 2 courses had been delivered with a total of 11 young people being involved and both proved to be a great success. In addition, to coincide with Older People's Week at the beginning of October 2015, the Community Action Team had attended several events. Other activities involved the delivery of fireworks' talks to all high schools in the area in partnership with Police Scotland and the Council's community wardens.

Group Manager Wright also reported on Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate inspection report that had been published in October 2015 on the audit of local service delivery in East Renfrewshire. A copy of the inspection report was appended to the report. He referred to the findings which were outlined in the report which were generally positive about the service being delivered by SFRS in East Renfrewshire. However, one of the findings did highlight that more recently relationships at a strategic level were perceived to be weaker.

Concluding his remarks, Group Manager Wright also reported on the partnership agreement between the SFRS and Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) which allowed SAS resources to be based within a community fire station. There were proposals for an ambulance and crew to be based at Clarkston Fire Station with a view to providing an even more effective emergency medical response to East Renfrewshire and the surrounding area.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Group Manager Wright explained how the partnership agreement between SFRS and Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) would operate; responded to questions about the findings in the report by Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate, particularly those regarding relationships at a strategic level being perceived to be weaker. He also explained the reasons why there was less community safety activity within East Renfrewshire as compared to Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Councils highlighting that this was a consequence of the relative needs of each area and was not a criticism of the service in East Renfrewshire.

Whilst commenting that the strategic engagement with SFRS had not been as strong as in the past and that long term planning was an issue given that further changes in senior personnel were about to take place, the Chief Executive stated that elected Members would welcome the opportunity to meet Deputy Assistant Chief Officer Paul Connolly, Head of Service Delivery in the West of Scotland with a view to discussing this matter further.

In reply, Group Manager Wright stated that Local Senior Officer Martin Gordon was aware of the issues that had been raised by the inspectorate and indicated that some continuity was required at senior management level within SFRS to address the issue.

It was noted that the Council had been advised that Local Senior Officer Martin Gordon would be moving to another position within SFRS and that his replacement would be Area Manager David Proctor.

The Cabinet, having heard Councillor Montague thank Local Senior Officer Martin Gordon in his absence for all his work during his time in East Renfrewshire, agreed to note the terms of the report.

VALEDICTORY – CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT ANDY BATES

1925. Councillor Montague referred to the forthcoming retirement of Chief Superintendent Bates and paid tribute to the excellent working relationship the Council had enjoyed with him as Divisional Commander of 'G' Division of Police Scotland.

On behalf of the Council, Councillor Montague wished Chief Superintendent Bates a long and happy retirement and presented him with a commemorative gift from the Council.

Chief Superintendent Bates replied in suitable terms.

CHAIR